

## Something Is Following Me!

By CC Huffhines

It is my shadow, a dark reflection of me caused by the bright sun.

Carl Jung, the famous psychologist, wrote: "How can I be substantial if I do not cast a shadow?" He believed that our shadow is a psychological term for everything we can't see in ourselves. I will follow his lead with this epistle today.

According to Jung, our shadow can be considered the "dark side" of our personality. It consists chiefly of our negative human emotions and impulses like rage, envy, greed, selfishness, desire, and the striving for power. Our personal shadows are the unexamined or disowned parts of our personalities, which we may deny but we never get rid of them. Our shadow stays with us, always right behind us. Trouble arises when we fail to see it.

To quote Jung again: "There is no light without shadow and no psychic wholeness without imperfection."

The ancient Greeks understood the need to honor all parts of the psyche. They believed if you knew a god and ignored him, he would turn against you and destroy you. Here's our challenge: the shadow may be operating on its own without our full awareness and so we do things we wouldn't consciously do and later regret.

This was demonstrated in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Dr. Jekyll was the "good" conscious side. He swallowed a potion to help eliminate his darker impulses. In this case, Mr. Hyde was Jung's personal shadow. The potion did not control the actions of Hyde's darker half, as he went on to murder a person. This is the fate, maybe not so severe, of anyone who denies his or her shadow.

Through time, we have adjusted our behavior to gratify our needs and learned to adapt to the external world. The child puts all of these unwanted parts into an invisible bag and drags it behind him through life.

Whatever qualities we deny in ourselves, we project onto others. If you get irritated when someone is rude to you, it's a good bet you haven't owned your own rudeness, else it wouldn't bother you so much. This may lift your ego, but such projection is dishonest and hurtful.

Next time you see your shadow, take an honest look at your attitudes, your behaviors, and your dark thoughts. Are you having dark thoughts about someone else? Be honest with yourself, know that you probably are catching your shadow in the act of projecting your own unrealized negatives on that person.